

Integrating and Managing Citizen Interactions via Multiple Channels

The U. S. Department of Justice, the U.S. Department of Education, the Corporation for National and Community Service and Aspen Systems presented this interactive workshop on Customer Relations Management (CRM) applications used by Federal agencies. CRM entails all aspects of interaction an organization has with customers. Technology has changed the way companies are approaching CRM strategies because it has also changed customer behavior. With each new advance in technology, especially the proliferation of self-service channels like the Web and WAP phones, more of the relationship is being managed electronically. Organizations are, therefore, looking for ways to personalize online experiences (a process also referred to as mass customization) through tools such as help-desk software, e-mail organizers and Web development applications. Presenters focused on integrating customer data from multiple channels to improve customer relations and increase customer satisfaction. The session covered technology and operational and technical considerations for integrating interactions through voice, fax, e-mail, and the web into databases. Aspen Systems is a world-class information management company that has provided these services for numerous federal agencies for many years including the Federal Trade Commission, General Services Administration, Corporation for National and Community Service, Health and Human Services, and the Department of State.

Multiple channel implementation factors include humans and enabling technologies. To explore these factors, presenters used the Department of Justice National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS) as a case study of integrated customer/citizen feedback and input from phone, e-mail, and web site comments into one database for tracking and analysis. Determining employee skills needed, training, and pay scale (must be 25-30% higher than for phone operators) and recruiting are essential to developing a customer relationship management (CRM) system that will provide information on customer needs and expectations, satisfaction, and complaints. Employee skills include a high level of reading comprehension, writing skills, accurate typing, multi-tasking ability, analytical skills, and people skills. Adequate training on electronic business etiquette, e-business writing (length, style, grammar), automated e-response system (business rules, flow, escalation and effective use of prescriptive response).

Quality assurance is very important because e-mail or web responses are legally binding and actionable. So a thorough knowledge of quality assurance methods is an essential part of a CRM system (statistical sampling, automated keystroke capture).

Productivity metrics are another element of an effective CRM system. For e-mail response,

■ Best Practice Turnaround Time	■ Agent Hourly Productivity
▲ Within 4 - 6 hours	▲ Manual
▲ "Less than 30% of retail sales sites respond to and resolve customer email inquiries within six hours."	● Depends on application
<i>Jupiter Media Metrix (1/2002)</i>	● Average of 6 - 8 per hour
	▲ Email Management System
	● Average of 20-40 per hour

Scheduling for stand-alone e-mail response center is more flexible and more productive. A multi-channel environment is more complex and requires workforce management tools and maximum voice agent productivity.

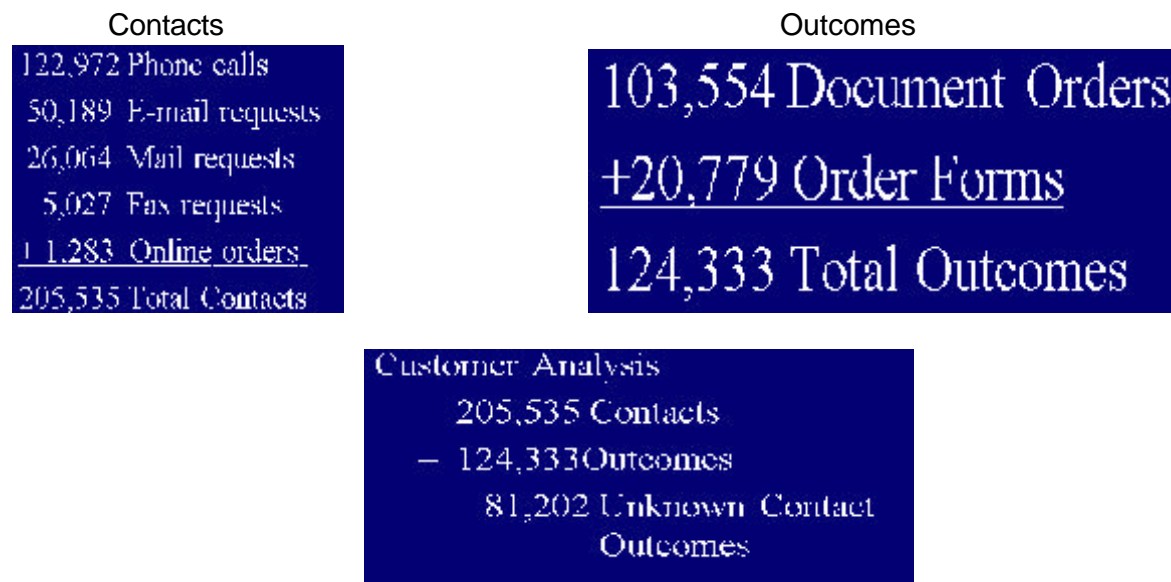
The following steps will lead to the development of an effective CRM strategy:

- Analyze organizational goals
- Determine organizational understanding of customers
 - ◆ Front-line staff have uniform understanding?
 - ◆ Does lack of understanding detract from achieving goals?
- Identify existing obstacles to improve understanding of customers
- Remove obstacles

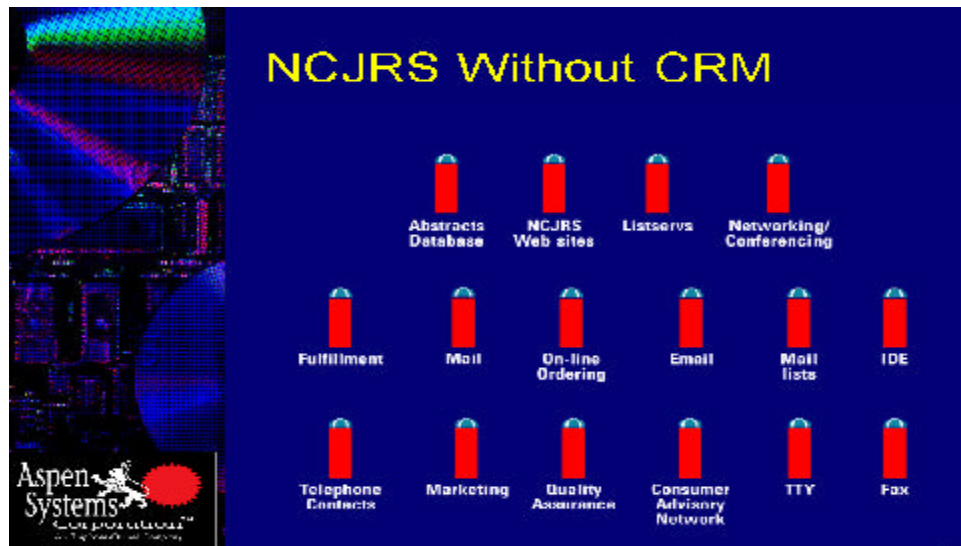
Case Study: NCJRS

Mission: Office of Justice Programs/(DOJ provides federal leadership in development of the nation's capacity to prevent and control crime, improve criminal and juvenile justice systems, increase knowledge about crime and related issues, and assist crime victims.

NCJRS: NCJRS provides services in support of OJP's bureaus and program offices to ensure accurate, timely, and efficient information dissemination to the field.



The diagram below shows the segregated customer preference and interest data that comes into the Agency that can't be understood.



With CRM technologies (CTI, IVR, Knowledgebase, Data Warehousing), the obstacles to making customer information understandable by agency employees can be removed. The Agency can use these technologies to build a customer knowledge database to make sense of the information coming in about customers through many different media and methods.

CRM Technologies:

CTI – computer-telephony-integration, which refers to systems that enable a computer to act as a call center, accepting incoming calls and routing them to the appropriate device or person. CTI systems can handle all sorts of incoming and outgoing communications, including phone calls, faxes, and Internet messages.

IVR – interactive voice response, a telephony technology in which someone uses a touch-tone telephone to interact with a database to acquire information from or enter data into the database. IVR technology does not require human interaction over the telephone as the user's interaction with the database is predetermined by what the IVR system will allow the user access to.

WAP – Wireless Application Protocol, a secure specification that allows users to access information instantly via handheld wireless devices such as mobile phones, pagers, two-way radios, smartphones and communicators. WAPs that use displays and access the Internet run what are called microbrowsers--browsers with small file sizes that can accommodate the low memory constraints of handheld devices and the low-bandwidth constraints of a wireless-handheld network.

Data Warehousing – A collection of data designed to support management decision making. Data warehouses contain a wide variety of data that present a coherent picture of customers and operations at a single point in time. Development of a data warehouse includes development of systems to extract data from operating systems plus installation of a warehouse database system that provides managers flexible access to the data. The term data warehousing generally refers to combine many different databases across an entire enterprise.

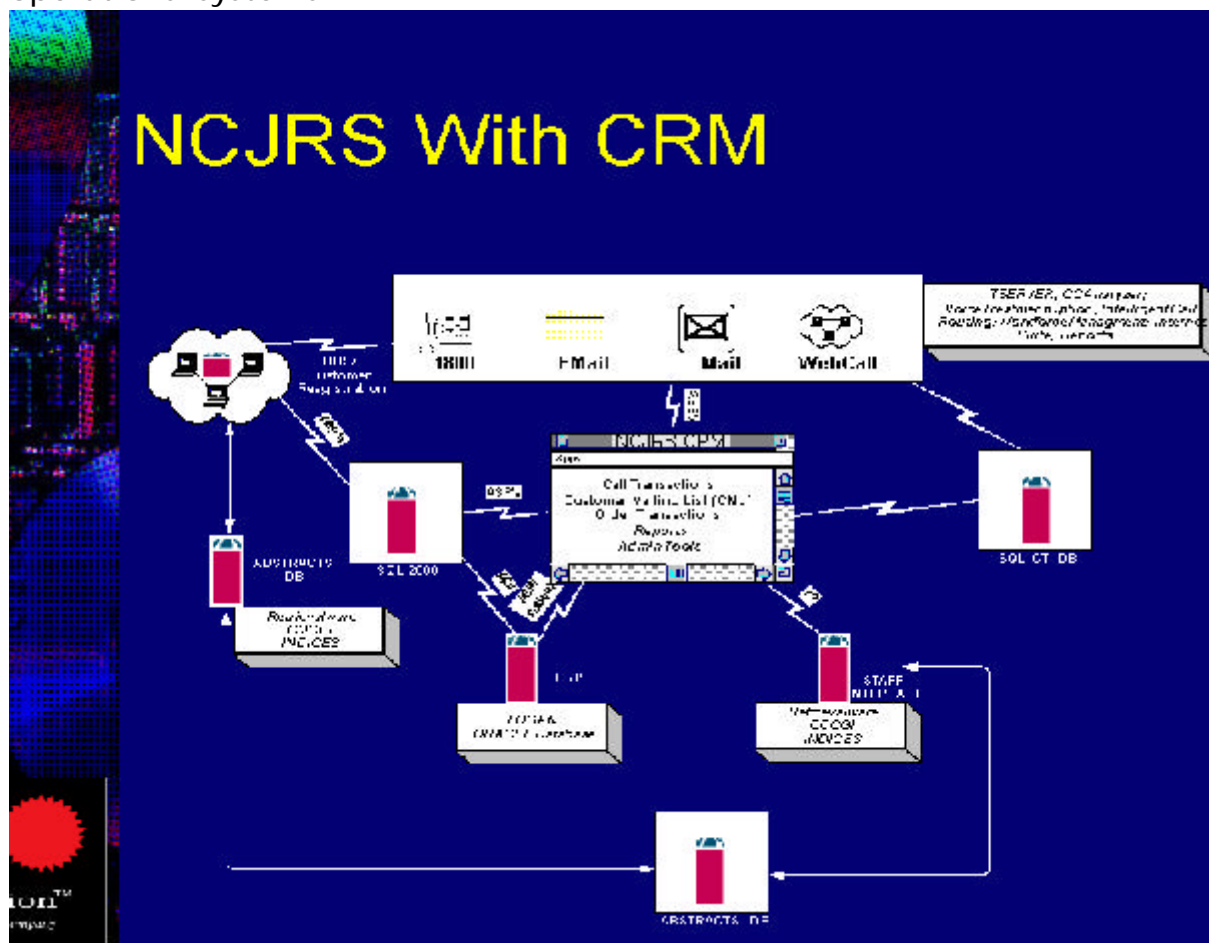
Data Mining – A hot buzzword for a class of database applications that look for hidden patterns in a group of data. For example, data mining software can help organizations find customers with common interests.

ERP – enterprise resource planning, a business management system that integrates all facets of an organization, including planning, operations, information delivery, customer feedback. As the ERP methodology has become more popular, software applications have emerged to help business managers implement ERP.

EAI – enterprise application integration. EAI is the unrestricted sharing of data and business processes throughout the networked applications or data sources in an organization. Early software programs in areas such as inventory control, human resources, sales automation and database management were designed to run independently, with no interaction between the systems.



NCJRS merges knowledge management technologies (search engines/data warehousing), Enterprise Relationship Packages (ERP), Mail technologies, Database servers (Oracle,/ MS SQL), Security, Applications, and Reporting technologies to enable the agency to make sense of all the information collected about customers and to analyze the information to understand customers and to better meet their expectations and anticipate their needs. The technologies allow for communication between the many channels for customer input and operational systems.



The steps in application development are visioning, strategizing, planning, building, launching, operating and maintaining. The steps for building an engagement model include focus groups to identify needs and wants, team assembly, clear goal and timetable, building/buying, credibility building, tracking progress, and promoting solid discussion. The benefits and outcomes of designing and implementing a customized CRM system are:

- an integrated data silo
- a scalable comprehensive system
- increased productivity
- better service – 360 degree view of customer
- earlier prediction of customer needs
- usefulness and relevance of information and reports

Operational considerations for a customized system are privacy, training, data analysis and interpretation, scope of work, and reporting. Rethink measurement and use it!

Customer Satisfaction Feedback Workshop

Customer satisfaction experts and survey methodologists from the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and other agencies provided practical experience in designing and developing customer satisfaction feedback instruments (written surveys, telephone interviews, Internet surveys, or focus group questionnaires). Facilitators also focused on feedback plans for analyzing and using customer input to improve a particular service or service to a particular customer group. The session presented an opportunity to learn about best practices/lessons learned from these agencies as well as how to streamline the OMB approval process, how to increase management support, and how to improve customer response to surveys.

OMB CLEARANCE INFORMATION – Don Bieniewicz

Paperwork Reduction Act: Clearance of Customer Satisfaction Surveys July 1998
The Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) was signed in 1995, but the statutory antecedent of the PRA was first signed in 1942. The PRA requires that the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approve each collection of information by a Federal agency before it can be implemented. The statute defines "collection of information" broadly. It covers any identical questions posed to 10 or more members of the public -- whether voluntary or mandatory, whether written, electronic, or oral.

Many conversations with citizens do not require PRA clearance -- employee conferences, complaint systems, suggestion systems, and town halls and other meetings with customers (driven by an agenda rather than "questions"). These conversations are either one-on-one, or structured so loosely that the questions are not "identical" within the meaning of the PRA.

Customer satisfaction questionnaires, focus groups, web sites (seeking a response to more specific questions than just an invitation for open-ended comments) are covered by the PRA. Given the importance of facilitating customer satisfaction surveys and other more structured collection efforts, many agencies have obtained generic clearances for customer satisfaction surveys from OMB. A generic clearance is a master plan for conducting one or more customer surveys. Many agencies have a current generic clearance for customer satisfaction surveys. OMB review for these plans occurs in two stages -- a full review of the overall plan, plus a quick review of the actual details of each customer survey. Once an agency has a plan on which the public has had full opportunity to comment, the agency's PRA paperwork clearance officer is able to obtain OMB approval for each customer survey very quickly without having to repeat the

Federal Register notices or public comment periods. If you think that you want to develop a customer satisfaction questionnaire to assist your efforts, you should consult with your agency's PRA contact early on. Others in your agency may have already developed ones that could serve as models. You should also ask the PRA paperwork clearance officer for a copy of OMB's Resource Manual for Customer Surveys.

To obtain OMB approval on a proposed customer satisfaction survey instrument, an agency PRA paperwork clearance officer assembles a clearance package including the draft questionnaire and its justification, and puts a notice in the Federal Register seeking public comment for 60 days. The PRA paperwork clearance officer then submits the clearance package to OMB for approval, and publishes a 30-day notice in the Federal Register notifying the public it can comment to OMB. OMB will then approve or disapprove the agency's clearance package. Given these public notices, the normal clearance process will total at least 100 days. When OMB approves an agency's survey, OMB provides the agency with an OMB approval number to place on the information collection instrument. Only at that point may the agency begin to distribute the questionnaire. We caution, however, that this is only a summary discussion. You need to contact your agency PRA paperwork clearance officer to learn the full scope of the PRA and your agency's procedures for obtaining OMB clearance.

Frequently Asked Questions about Customer Survey Clearance and the Paperwork Reduction Act

The Office of Management and Budget--specifically the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs--administers the Paperwork Reduction Act. An agency must get clearance from OMB before it can survey its customers or collect information from the public.

Given the importance of facilitating customer satisfaction surveys and other more structured "conversations," many agencies have already obtained generic clearances for customer satisfaction surveys from OMB. A generic clearance is a master plan for conducting one or more customer surveys. Many agencies have a current generic clearance for customer satisfaction surveys. OMB review for these plans occurs in two stages -- a full review of the overall plan, plus a quick review of the actual details of each customer survey. Once an agency has a plan on which the public has had full opportunity to comment, the agency's PRA paperwork clearance officer is able to obtain OMB approval for each customer survey very quickly without having to repeat the Federal Register notices or public comment periods. If you think that you want to develop a customer satisfaction questionnaire to assist your efforts, you should consult with your agency's PRA contact early on.

The following are general answers to the questions most commonly posed to the NPR staff. We caution, however, that this is only a summary discussion. You need to contact your agency PRA paperwork clearance officer to learn the full scope of the PRA and your agency's procedures for obtaining OMB clearance.

1. What is a generic survey clearance?

A generic clearance is a master plan for conducting one or more customer surveys. OMB review for these plans occurs in two stages -- a full review of the overall plan, plus a quick review of the actual details of each customer survey.

2. When does an agency need a survey clearance?

The PRA requires that OMB approve each collection of information

by a Federal agency before it can be implemented. The statute defines "collection of information" broadly. It covers any identical questions posed to 10 or more members of the public -- whether voluntary or mandatory, whether written, electronic, or oral.

Many conversations with citizens do not require PRA clearance -- employee conferences, complaint systems, suggestion systems, and town halls, listening sessions, and other meetings with customers (driven by an agenda rather than "questions"). These conversations are either one-on-one, or structured so loosely that the questions are not "identical" within the meaning of the PRA.

On the other hand, the PRA is a statute, and it applies to efforts to collect citizen feedback just as it applies to other Federal information collections. Customer satisfaction questionnaires, focus groups, web sites (seeking a response to more specific questions than just an invitation for open-ended comments) are covered by the PRA.

3. Why is a generic survey clearance important?

A generic survey clearance allows an agency to develop a plan in advance which sets forth how it will conduct customer satisfaction surveys without having to clear the actual instruments until needed. Once an agency has a plan approved by OMB under the PRA on which the public has had full opportunity to comment, the agency's PRA paperwork clearance officer may request OMB approval for each customer survey covered by the plan without having to repeat the Federal Register notices and public comment periods.

4. Does a generic clearance include surveys conducted on the web site?

Surveys (i.e., those containing specific questions, not just containing an invitation for open-ended comments or requesting basic identifying information like name and e-mail address) conducted on the website are covered by the PRA. They need OMB approval before they can be put onto the website.

Whether an agency's generic clearance includes electronic, oral, or written surveys depends on what the agency requested in its plan, and what OMB has approved. You will need to contact your agency's PRA paperwork clearance officer.

5. How long does the process for generic clearance take?

To obtain OMB approval for a regular questionnaire, the agency PRA paperwork clearance officer assembles a clearance package including the draft questionnaire and its justification, and puts a notice in the Federal Register seeking public comment for 60 days. The PRA paperwork clearance officer then perhaps amends the draft questionnaire in response to comments received during the comment period, submits the clearance package to OMB for approval, and publishes a 30-day notice in the Federal Register notifying the public it can comment to OMB. OMB will then approve or disapprove the

agency's clearance package. Given these public notices, the normal clearance process will total at least 100 days. The process for obtaining a generic clearance takes as long as any other normal clearance.

6. How long is a generic clearance good for?

The expiration date on any PRA clearance is set when OMB approves it. This time is generally three years (the maximum allowable under the PRA), but may be less if appropriate to the agency's plan.

7. Is there a fast track method for obtaining a generic clearance?

Generally no. The purpose of obtaining a generic clearance is to have the agency plan in advance for the kinds of customer satisfaction surveys it wishes to conduct, and to give the public the opportunity to comment concerning this plan -- in return for the quick review and approval of individual customer satisfaction surveys conducted under the agency's plan.

OMB is able to provide an "emergency" clearance that permits the agency to avoid the 60-day and 30-day Federal Register notices seeking public comment if the emergency situation warrants it. (Under the PRA, an "emergency" approval is only valid for a maximum of 6 months). OMB has and will grant an "emergency" approval for individual customer satisfaction surveys based on agreements reached between OMB and the agency's PRA paperwork clearance officer. You should consult with your agency's PRA paperwork clearance officer before you seek an emergency clearance.

8. Is there a way to keep a survey clearance in place while an agency is waiting for an extension of its generic survey clearance?

Under the PRA, an OMB approval is valid for a maximum of three years. If the agency's PRA paperwork clearance officer sees that an approval for a generic clearance is about to expire, he or she can ask OMB to extend the existing clearance for three months while he or she prepares the formal request for a three year extension. Once the formal request for a three year extension is submitted, OMB will keep the existing clearance in effect until OMB acts on the formal request for extension. If a survey is changed, it must be submitted for OMB review.

9. Is an OMB clearance necessary for Federal surveys sent to State, local, and tribal governments?

Yes. As indicated in the answer to Question 2, the PRA covers any identical questions posed to 10 or more members of the public -- whether voluntary or mandatory, whether written, electronic, or oral.

A more formal answer is that the PRA covers identical questions posed to 10 or more "persons." "Person" is a term defined in the PRA to include any individual, business, institution (including schools, non profits, etc.); State, tribal, or local government or branch or

political subdivision thereof, or any other entity. The PRA excludes identical questions posed to 10 or more agencies, instrumentalities, or employees of the United States (unless they are to be used for general statistical purposes).

10. Has there been any type of decision to change the Paperwork Reduction Act as a result of GPRA requirements to collect customer information?

There is no intent to change the Paperwork Reduction Act at this time. The PRA and GPRA are compatible and serve similar purposes. OMB, as the lead agency on the government's GPRA efforts, is fully aware of the need for agencies to collect customer information to help them meet GPRA requirements, and is working with the agency PRA paperwork clearance officers to facilitate their clearance of such surveys.

11. When is a comment card subject to PRA clearance?

A comment card may or may not be subject to PRA clearance, depending on the kinds of questions it contains. If the comment card contains specific questions seeking a focused response, it could need clearance under the PRA. If the comment card only invites open-ended comments, it may not need clearance under the PRA.

Agency PRA paperwork clearance officers are quite familiar with this issue, and have reached understandings with OMB on what kinds of questions (for example, on a website or on a comment card) are "in" or "out." Consult with them before using any comment card.

12. Do focus groups need Paperwork Reduction Act clearance?

Yes -- assuming that the focus groups are working from predetermined scripts that are being asked each group.

13. Is there a limit to the amount of burden hours that an agency may receive?

No. Each year, agencies agree to a target for the paperwork burden hours that they will impose on the public, and OMB publishes those targets in the Information Collection Budget. This is, however, only a target. The agency's PRA paperwork clearance officer is able to send OMB whatever clearance packages he or she wants.

14. What are some survey development resources within the Federal government?

Please ask your agency's PRA paperwork clearance officer for a copy of OMB's Resource Manual for Customer Surveys.

15. Do we have to comply with the Paperwork Reduction Act?

As indicated in the answer to Question 2, many "conversations with America" do not require PRA clearance -- employee conferences, complaint systems, suggestion systems, and town halls and other meetings with customers (driven by an agenda rather than "questions"). These conversations are either one-on-one, or structured so loosely that the questions are not "identical" within the meaning of the PRA.

On the other hand, the PRA is a statute. The PRA has been in effect for over 55 years. Three years ago, it passed the Senate by a vote of 99 to 0, and the House by a vote of 418 to 0. President Clinton signed the PRA into law with enthusiasm, stating, "[the Paperwork Reduction Act helps us to conquer a mountain of paperwork that is crushing our people and wasting a lot of time"

The PRA applies to "conversations with America" just as it applies to other Federal information collections. Customer satisfaction questionnaires, focus groups, web sites (seeking a response to more specific questions than just an invitation for open-ended comments) are covered by the PRA.

16. Why is the Paperwork Reduction Act required when there are two executive orders requiring agencies to survey their customers?

The Federal government has many statutory responsibilities that include investing in education and training, strengthening health care, protecting the environment, promoting useful research, enforcing the law, and collecting taxes. In carrying out these statutory responsibilities, agencies collect information -- and submit their surveys, recordkeeping requirements, and other collections of information to OMB for review and approval under the PRA. The same is true for collections of information carried out to meet Presidential initiatives embodied in Executive Orders.

Additional Information:

Available from OFFICE OF INFORMATION AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS, OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET: THE PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT OF 1995: IMPLEMENTING GUIDANCE FOR OMB REVIEW OF AGENCY INFORMATION COLLECTION (August 16, 1999 DRAFT), – 160 pages + 4 Appendices

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) reviews, approves or disapproves proposed agency information collections in light of the policy criteria and internal agency planning procedures established by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA). Since 1942, the PRA and its predecessors have established policy and procedural requirements instructing agencies how to collect information.

This Implementing Guidance is intended to support agency compliance with the PRA. It is based on the PRA, and OMB's 55 years of experience in overseeing agency compliance with the PRA and in working with agencies to understand its underlying policy standards. It provides additional interpretive guidance elaborating on the legal requirements under the PRA and OMB's implementing regulations.

Although the scope of the PRA and its provisions have changed over the years, the underlying policy standards of the PRA remain the same. An agency's collection of information is to:

- 1) minimize the burden on respondents and the cost of the collection to the agency,
- 2) serve an agency purpose in meeting a specific agency need,
- 3) maximize practical utility, and
- 4) not unnecessarily duplicate available information.

This Implementing Guidance describes the responsibilities and authorities applicable to the collection of information under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995. First, it describes the responsibilities of each agency that conducts or sponsors a collection of information, whether it

consists of a questionnaire, a recordkeeping requirement, a third-party disclosure, a label, or any other form of collection of information from the public. Second, the Implementing Guidance sets forth the responsibilities and authorities of OMB.

This Implementing Guidance is organized as a reference tool. It begins with a general discussion of the PRA and its primary policy criteria. It then provides a more specific discussion of agency planning and evaluation of each draft information collection, as called for by the PRA, the OMB regulation implementing the PRA, and OMB Form 83-I. OMB Form 83-I, together with the Supporting Statement and other necessary documentation, is the means by which each agency submits to OMB a proposed collection of information for review and approval. Each of these documents is included as an Appendix in this Implementing Guidance. The Appendices also include examples of PRA notices published in the Federal Register, suggested procedures for estimating burden, and answers to frequently asked statistical questions.

The Office of Management and Budget--Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OMB-OIRA) web site on Paperwork Requirements, provides the downloadable PDF file "Submission Form (Form OMB 83-I)" with a complete explanation of how to fill out an OMB form 83-I and how to prepare a supporting statement: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/infoereg/infocoll.html>

The OMB-OIRA web site on Statistical Programs and Standards, provides the downloadable PDF file "Appendix A, Standards for Maintaining, Collecting, and Presenting Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity": <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/infoereg/statpolicy.html>

A 1997 guidance document prepared by the Department of the Interior describes the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) clearance process step-by-step: <http://www.doi.gov/nrl/RegWeb/lc-guide.html>

The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (S.244): <http://www.doi.gov/nrl/RegWeb/Paperw~1.htm>

The Joint Program in Survey Methodology (JPSM): <http://www.jpsm.umd.edu>